

AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the Specification

Please replace the paragraph spanning pages 4 and 5 of the Specification as follows:

The separation tools 10 comprise tubular punching or stamping tools, for example, in the form of punching capillaries 11 through 18. As an alternative, other cutting tools can be provided also. Each punching tool is connected at one end with a guide portion 21 of the holding device 20 so as to be moveable in the axial direction. At the other end of each punching tool a cutting edge is provided. The cross-sectional shape, the geometric dimensions, and the relative arrangement of the punching tools are determined based on the application. For sample taking on separation gels, each punching tool is preferably formed by a capillary at whose end the cutting edge is provided by the end of the capillary wall. The inner diameter of the capillary is selected based on the application and is preferably less than the thickness of the material (separation gel, membranes or the like) from which the sample is to be taken. For conventional two-dimensional separation gels, the inner diameter is preferably approximately 0.5 to 2 mm, for example, approximately 1 mm. The thickness and the material of the capillary wall are selected in order to provide a sufficient durability ~~resistance~~ for the separation step. The capillaries can be comprised of an inert material such as, for example, metal, glass, ceramic or plastic material. Steel capillaries are preferred because of their high durability ~~resistance~~. The relative spacing between the capillaries is adjusted depending on the application based on the conditions of the target substrates. When the target substrates is, for example, a microtiter plate (see Fig. 2), the capillary spacing corresponds to the reservoir spacing of the microtiter plate (for example. 9 mm).